Revival of NCDEX

2045. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have permitted to revive the National Commodity Derivative Exchange (NCDEX) that has been banned in early sixties;

(b) if so, the reasons for its revival as intermediary between the producers and consumers of agro products;

(c) whether the spurt in prices of pulses and staple commodities in the market may be attributed to this in between NCDEX;

(d) whether Standing Committee has made any recommendation on this issue; and

(e) if so, whether Government are going to accept the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), Mumbai did not exist in early sixties and was never banned. The Government granted recognition to the NCDEX on 20th November 2003. The Exchange started its operation on 15th December, 2003. The recognition has been granted on a permanent basis.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

(d) The Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution in its Seventeenth Report has recommended that agricultural commodities especially foodgrains including coarsegrains, pulses and sugar need not be permitted to be traded in the commodity markets including forward/futures contract derivatives and options.

(e) In the context of discussion regarding whether and to what extent futures trading has contributed to price rise in agricultural commodities in recent times, the Government has set up an Expert Committee on 2.3.2007 under the Chairmanship of Professor Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission to study, *inter-alia*, the extent of impact, if any, of futures trading on wholesale and retail prices of agricultural commodities. A decision on forward trading in agricultural commodities would be taken after the Report of the Expert Committee is examined by the Government.

BPL families benefited under PDS in Assam

2046. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of BPL families in Assam;

(b) the number of BPL families benefited under the Public Distribution System in Assam;

(c) whether above BPL families have also been issued ration cards;

(d) if so, the number thereof and the reasons therefor;

(e) the steps taken to ensure that persons belonging to poor and vulnerable sections of the society only benefit from the scheme; and

(f) whether the vigilance mechanism needs to be strengthened and made functional?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) On the basis of poverty estimate of Planning Commission for the year 1993-94 projected on population estimates of Registrar General of India as on 1st March, 2000, number of BPL families in Assam for coverage under TPDS has been worked out as 18.36 lakh. This includes 7.040 lakh AAY families. The Government of Assam has already identified 18.36 lakh BPL families (including 7.040 AAY families) and issued ration cards to them. The Central Government is allocating foodgrains to the State for all the 18.36 lakh BPL families.

(e) Under the TPDS, the identification of Targetted eligible BPL families, issuance of ration cards to them, distribution of foodgrains to them and supervision of FPSs are responsibilities of the State Government. As provided under the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, the State Government has to make proper identification of the beneficiaries by ensuring that all the vulnerable sections of the society are covered within the limits prescribed by the Central Government.

(f) Yes, Sir. The Central Government has directed the State Government to constitute Vigilance Committees at various levels by taking card holders as well as people's representatives as members; these Committees need to be further activated for ensuring smooth functioning of the TPDS. For greater transparency in TPDS operations, a revised Citizen's Charter has been issued in July, 2007 to enable use of provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005 by citizens in relation to functioning of the TPDS.

Coupons for foodgrains to ration card holders

2047. SHRI AJAY MAROO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are going to implement a scheme of providing coupons for foodgrains to ration card holders;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of States where this scheme is going to be introduced alongwith the date thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The Government of India has not decided to implement any scheme of providing coupons for foodgrains to ration card holders. However, Food Coupons have been introduced under the TPDS by some of the State Governments viz. Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Bihar. In this system, counterfoils of receipts coupons are retained by the Fair Price Shop dealers while issuing TPDS commodities to the beneficiaries. The retained counterfoils/coupons are then